

REMARKS

Claims 1 through 6 remain pending in this application. In response to the Office Action dated October 10, 2003, claim 1 has been amended. Care has been taken to avoid the introduction of new matter. Favorable reconsideration of the application in light of the following comments is respectfully solicited.

Claims 1 through 3 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheong, of record, in view of newly cited U.S. patent 6,589,801 (Yoon). The rejection, appearing at paragraph 3 of the Office Action, describes Cheong in identical manner to that presented in the earlier Office Action of July 8, 2003. The Office Action again recognizes that the Cheong display device does not display "the general graded data transported from the data processing section, thereby indicating the degree of quality assurance of the inspected individual semiconductor device." For teaching of this feature the Office Action now looks to Yoon, in place of the previously relied upon Nanbu patent.

At issue is the claimed requirement for general graded data. As disclosed, each substance under test is subject to a plurality of inspections, graded data being produced for each inspection item. For each tested substance, the general graded data pertaining to the degree of quality assurance is determined and displayed. The quality assurance automatic display system grades inspections in consideration of variations in reliability attributable to a difference between the pieces of inspection and attributable to a difference between inspection methods. The resultant general grade can be provided on the inspected semiconductor device, thereby enabling a user to ascertain the correct degree of quality assurance. Manufacturers of the semiconductor device can set appropriate prices for the semiconductor device in accordance with the correct degree of quality assurance

(specification, page 8, line 16+). Thus, not only is it known that the device has passed an inspection or test, but the degree of quality of assurance is also indicated.

The specification exemplifies the term "general graded data" at page 6, lines 13-25, as follows:

The inspection item graded data held in the inspection item data hold section 2a are transported to the data processing section 2b provided in the data processor 2. Subsequently, general graded data pertaining to the degree of quality assurance of the semiconductor device 10 are determined by means of an algorithm employed in the data processing section 2b. The algorithm employed in the data processing section 2b is weighted for each inspection item. For instance, when the inspection item graded data pertaining to an electrical characteristic are determined to be A1, the inspection item graded data pertaining to burn-in are determined to be A1, and inspection item graded data pertaining to another inspection item are determined to be A1, general graded data are determined to be A1. In contrast, when the inspection item graded data pertaining to an electrical characteristic are determined to be A2 and inspection item graded data pertaining to burn-in and inspection item graded data pertaining to another inspection item are determined to be A1, general graded data are determined to be A2.

The general graded data determined by the data processing section 2b of the data processor 2 are transported to the display device 3, where the general graded data are displayed. Here, the display device 3 is embodied in a printer. For example, general graded data, such as "A1" or "A2," can be inscribed directly on a package of the semiconductor device 10 by means of a laser marker.

As thus defined in the specification, the general graded data is derived from a weighting of the individual grades for the various inspections for an item, to give an indication of quality insurance of the overall inspection, taking into account that one or more inspections grades lower than others.

Independent claim 1 has been further amended to more clearly recite the general graded data concept. Portions of this amended claim are reproduced as follows:

the inspection item data hold section holding inspection item graded data for a plurality of inspection items which have been graded by determination of reliability for each of the inspection items for a substance to be inspected; and

the data processing section determining general graded data pertaining to the degree of quality assurance of the substance in accordance with an algorithm employed in the data processing section after having received the inspection item graded data from the inspection item data hold section, wherein *the general graded data corresponds to weighted inspection item graded data for each substance inspected . . . .*

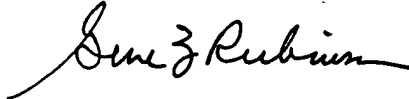
Yoon has been carefully considered with particular focus directed to those portions identified in the Office Action. It is submitted that there is no disclosure in Yoon of general graded data that corresponds to a weighting of data for a plurality of inspection grades for each substance inspected, as now explicitly required in amended claim 1. A person of ordinary skill in the art, having considered the teachings of Cheong and Yoon either alone or in combination, would have had no motivation to determine general graded data as required by claim 1. Withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1, therefore, is respectfully solicited.

Claims 2 through 6 are dependent from claim 1. Claims 4 through 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheong in view of Yoon and Moore, of record, and Brunner, of record. The latter two references have been relied upon for addressing the additional limitations added by dependent claims 4 through 6. Moore and Brunner provide no teachings that overcome the deficiencies of the prior art with respect to parent claim 1. It is submitted, therefore, that claims 2 through 6 are patentably distinguishable for at least the same basis as described above with respect to claim 1.

Allowance of the application is respectfully solicited. To the extent necessary, a petition for an extension of time under 37 C.F.R. 1.136 is hereby made. Please charge any shortage in fees due in connection with the filing of this paper, including extension of time fees, to Deposit Account 500417 and please credit any excess fees to such deposit account.

Respectfully submitted,

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A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Gene Z. Robinson".

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